

What is Pittman-Robertson land?

Pittman-Robertson is a law approved by Congress in September of 1937 which provides funding for the selection, restoration, rehabilitation and improvement of wildlife habitat so that wildlife may be readily available to American hunters. Sometimes known by its more formal name, the "Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Act," the law now includes money for hunter training programs and public target ranges as well. Most of the property designated as a "Wildlife Management Area" in your state will be land acquired through the Pittman-Robertson Act.

STONY CREEK VALLEY IS PITTMAN-ROBERTSON LAND

Pittman-Robertson land is acquired through a dedicated 11 percent Federal excise tax on long guns, ammunition, and archery equipment, and a 10 percent tax on handguns. These funds are collected from the manufacturers by the Department of the Treasury and are apportioned each year to the States by the Department of the Interior based on a formula that factors in both the total area of the state and the number of licensed hunters in the state. Pittman-Robertson is a cost-reimbursement program, which means the states must first cover the full amount of an approved project and then apply for reimbursement through Federal Aid for up to 75 percent of the project's cost.

A similar law, called the Dingell-Johnson Sport Fish Restoration Act taxes fishing equipment and tackle, and electric outboard motors in order to raise revenue for stream and pond access and restoration.

The Pittman-Robertson program may be the most effective and least written about Federal program ever created. Since its inception, more than \$2.5 billion has been spent acquiring land for hunters, and as a consequence every species has benefited. Among the notable wildlife successes on Pittman-Robertson land has been the return of wild turkey, white-tailed deer, pronghorn antelope, wood duck, beaver, black bear, giant Canada goose, American elk, desert bighorn sheep, bobcat, mountain lion, and large numbers of raptors, to say nothing of such non-game species as song birds.

Across the U.S., hunters now spend some \$10 billion every year on equipment and trips. Non-hunting nature lovers (birders, hikers, fishermen, campers, picnickers) also spend large sums of money to enjoy wildlife, and both groups count Pittman-Robertson land as a favorite location.

In fact, recent estimates indicate about 70 percent of the people using Pittman-Robertson land are not hunting. That said, the land is not crowded, and 100 percent of all Pittman-Robertson land is purchased or leased by hunters using money obtained from hunters. The primary purpose of all Pittman-Robertson land is its use as a hunting property.

All of this is introduction to the fact that Secretary of the Interior Sally Jewell just announced that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will distribute nearly \$1.1 billion in excise tax revenues paid by sportsmen and sportswomen to state and territorial fish and wildlife agencies to fund land and wildlife conservation and recreation projects across the nation. Notes Jewell:

"People who enjoy hunting, fishing, boating and recreational shooting provide a strong foundation for conservation funding in this country. The taxes they pay on equipment and boating fuel support critical fish and wildlife management and conservation efforts, create access for recreational boating, and underpin education programs that help get kids outdoors."

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service apportions the funds to all 50 states and territories through the Pittman-Robertson Wildlife Restoration and Dingell-Johnson Sport Fish Restoration programs. Revenues come from excise taxes generated by the sale of sporting firearms, ammunition, archery equipment, fishing equipment and tackle, and electric outboard motors.

Sarah Margaret "Sally" Jewell is a British-American businessperson who served as the 51st United States secretary of the interior in the administration of President Barack Obama from 2013 to 2017.